

Sault Area Hospital

Withdrawal Management & Safe Beds



About Us

For over 40 years, Sault Area Hospital operated a 16-bed residential withdrawal management/mental health and justice safe beds (WMS/SB) unit. This program was previously housed at 911 Queen Street East, but had to be urgently relocated to space within Sault Area Hospital at 750 Great Northern Road due to rising risks related to issues with the facility. Unfortunately, to comply with the space limitations of the new temporary location within SAH and COVID-19 physical distancing requirements, the number of beds was reduced.

In February of 2018, the City of Sault Ste. Marie passed a resolution endorsing withdrawal management as a priority for our community. Since then, the need has only increased. In March, April, and May 2020, the number of suspected drug-related deaths in our community was approximately 25% higher than the average number of suspected drug-related deaths reported each month in 2019 and the first two months of 2020.

SAH, in collaboration with our Patient and Family Advisors and community partners, has been actively shepherding its proposal for expanded Mental Health and Addictions services in our community through the approvals with the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health North. This proposal set a goal of creating a service that offers 20 residential withdrawal management beds & safe beds and is supported by 4 hospital-based medical beds; with plans for future expansion and co-location of complementary services.



What are residential withdrawal management & safe beds?

Residential Withdrawal Management is a short-term service that provides a helpful, safe location for individuals 16 and older who are experiencing substance withdrawal, are intoxicated, or seeking help with relapse prevention. **Safe Beds** provides voluntary crisis accommodations and support for those with mental health and or additions crises.

What services will be offered?

Compassionate and tailored care for individuals (16 years and older), who are seeking residential withdrawal management, relapse prevention or safe bed support. The services provided will include comprehensive assessment, medical support (including medication-assisted symptom and craving management), education including; harm reduction, healthy coping, life skills, and relapse prevention, Continuum of Care treatment planning and referrals, individual and group counselling & support, and peer support & self-help groups.

Why is this information being shared?

The relocation of Residential Withdrawal Management and Safe Beds services at 145 Old Garden River Road has been approved. Together with the property owner, we are in the process of rezoning the property.

As part of our Community Engagement Plan regarding this expansion of our Mental Health & Addictions services, we want to introduce ourselves and answer any questions the community may have.

Where will the services be located?

The services will be offered at 145 Old Garden River Road (former Sault Star building).

Why was this location selected?

Sault Area Hospital's core project team completed a comprehensive search of all available spaces in Sault Ste. Marie. Each option was evaluated based on Provincial Standards for Withdrawal Management Services and Ministry of Health Space Standards for community-based programs. Some of the criteria used to determine suitability included:

- Proximity to the hospital and emergency services
- Physical space (square footage)
- Centralized location
- Building code/CSA/fire suppression
- Access to 'green space' for outdoor wellness activities
- Suitability as a residential/congregate-care centre
- Accessible via public transportation, and space for parking
- Space to expand or ability to co-locate other SAH services in the same building

Consultation took place with our provincial, regional, and community partners, including; Indigenous Partners, Social Services, MH&A Services, Patient and Family Advisors, and Healthcare providers, to inform this decision.

Will the property be improved?

The project includes renovations to the interior and exterior of the existing building. The outdoor area will be improved with landscaping and functional space co-designed with key stakeholders and community partners; design elements may include therapeutic gardens, sitting area, and outdoor activity areas.

How long until the new location opens?

SAH and our Patient and Family Advisors, along with the Ministry of Health, the City of Sault Ste. Marie, and community partners, are working hard to relocate these services as soon as possible. Currently, 13 residential withdrawal management & safe beds supported by 4 hospital-based medical beds are available at SAH.

We are committed to sharing updates on our progress through Sault Area Hospital's social media platforms. Follow us at [**@SaultAreaHospital**](#)

Who will provide care at the centre?

A dedicated clinical and support services team will be on site 24/7. This multi-disciplinary care team includes:

- Registered Social Workers and Psychotherapists
- Registered Addiction Services Workers
- Registered Nurses
- Registered Practical Nurses
- Nurse Practitioners
- Addiction Medicine Physicians
- Support Services Staff

How will these services improve Mental Health & Addictions care in our community?

The relocation of the residential withdrawal management and safe beds services will ensure that individuals in our community have access to a specially designed environment and high-quality mental health and addiction care, where and when they need it.

SAH is committed working with our community partners and all levels of government to continue improving access to these much-needed services in our community.

These services are essential for our community, and we want to ensure questions are answered. We may not have all the answers as there are still areas being planned and developed; we will do our best to provide information as it becomes available.

Please send any questions to: publicaffairs@sah.on.ca